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Message Text

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10
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AGR-05 ACDA-05 AID-05 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04

SIL-01 OMB-01 /123 W
---------- 015666
R 231713Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5002
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
FOSIF ROTA
COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0168

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PFOR PDEV MR MO AG SS
SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN VIEWS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: WELL-INFORMED MAURITANIANS ASSERT GIRM DOES NOT INTEND TO REPLACE NOW TERMINATED CLOSE ALGERIAN TIES WITH SPECIAL MOROCCAN RELATIONSHIP. MAURITANIA TRYING TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL BALANCING ACT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA. GIRM REPORTEDLY STILL HOPES TO TAKE CONTROL OF ALL WADI DHEHAB (RIO DE ORO). MAURITANMBFS ARE FINALLY REALIZING THEY HAVE TAKEN ON IMPOVERISHED
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WELFARE PROVINCE IN FORM OF MAURITANIAN SAHARA. GIRM DIPLOMATIC

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ACTIVITY CONTINUES AT HIGH PTICH. END SUMMARY.

1. MAURITANIAN BUSINESSMAN WITH CLOSE TIES TO SENIOR GIRM OFFICIALS MADE SEVERAL SURPRISING ASSERTIONS TO EMBOFF IN FREE-WHEELING CONVERSATION JANUARY 22 ON SAHARA. ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHEN BUSINESSMAN WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND WHEN HE WAS REFLECTING OFFICIAL VIEWS, HE IS IN POSITION TO KNOW CURRENT RIO'S THINKING ON SAHARAN POLICY. HE COMMENTED: (A) MAURITANIAN "PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP" WITH ALGERIA HAS ENDED AND WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE REVIVED. MAURI-TANIA HAS FINALLY LEARNED THAT "ALGERIAN PATH" IS NOT BEST COURSE TO FOLLOW. EXCEPT FOR STRONG BIAS OF PRESI-DENT OULD DADDAH, MAURITANIA MIGHT DROP ALGERIAN CON-NECTION ENTIRELY. OULD DADDAH WISHES TO PRESERVE LINK, HOWEVER, AND WILL PROBABLY TRY TO PLAY ALGERIA OFF AGAINST MOROCCO SO THAT MAURITANIA, AS WEAKEST PARTICIPANT IN THIS TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP, CAN EXERT DEGREE OF IN-FLUENCE DISPROPORLIONATE TO ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POWER. (B) RESPONDING TO QUESTION ON FUTURE OF MAUGO-TANIAN RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO BUSINESSMAN SAID HE DOES NOT EXPECT MOROCCO TO FILL VOID LEFT BY ALGERIA. MAURI-TANIA WILL BE VERY RELUCTANT TO ENTER AGAIN INTO "PILGI-LEGED RELATIONSHIP" WITH ANY COUNTRY, INCLUDING MOROCCO, ALTHOUGH GIRM TIES WITH MOROCCO ARE CURRENTLY VERY CLOSE, MAURITANIANS REMAIN WARY OF MOROCCAN INTENTIONS. INDEED, MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO ALL OF MAURITANIA ARE STILL RECENT HISTORY. (C) IMPLYING THAT HE WAS NOT REFLECTING OFFI-CIAL POLICY, BUSINESSMAN SAID IDEAL SOLUTION TO PRESENT MAURITANIAN DILEMMA, AS CONCERNS RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, WOULD BE WAR BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO IN WHICH NEITHER PARTY"WON" BUT BOTH WERE SERIOUSLY WEAKENED. THEN, WITH MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN STRENGTH REDUCED RELATIVE TO MAURITANIA, MAURITANIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY MORE IMPORTANT ROLE IN THREE-WAY RELATION-SHIP. (D) BUSINESSMAN STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT IN EVENT WAR BREAKS OUT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, MOROCCO WOULD COME OUT ON TOP. MOROCCO, HE ASSERTED, HOLDS MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER ALGERIA. SUGGESTIONS TO CONTRARY MADE NO IMPRESSION. (DURING LUNCH JANUARY -- FOR REGIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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LABOR ATTACHE, THREE ADDITIONAL MAURITANIANS--NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER, MIDDLE-LEVEL CIVIL SERVANT IN MINISTRY OF LABOR, AND SENIOR OFFICIAL IN WATER AND POWER ADMINISTRATION MADE PRE-
CISELY SAME ASBERTION.) COMMENT: FACT THAT FOUR NONMILITARY MAURITANIANS BELIEVE MOROCCO HOLDS MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER ALGERIA DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN GIRM IS OPERATING ON THIS ASSUMPTION. ON OTHER HAND, AT LEAST TWO OF THESE MAURITA-

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NIANS ARE UN-USUALLY WELL INFORMED AND HAVE ACCESS TO OFFICIAL
THINKING ON SAHARA. END COMMENT. (E) BUSINESSMAN INSISTED
MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAVE NOT YET AGREED UPON LINE FOR
PARTITIONING SAHARA. HE SAID DAKHLA WILL CLEARLY GO TO
MAURITANIA, ADDING GIRM HOPES TO OBTAIN AREA ROUGHLY CORRESPONDING
TO RIO DE ORO. LINE MAY BE DRAWN FROM CABO BOJADOR
EASTWARDS TO POINT JUST SOUTH OF ANGLE WHERE WADI DHEHAB
AND SAKIET AL-HAMRA MEET. THIS WILL GIVE PHOSPHATES
TO MOROCCANS AND FISH TO MAURITANIANS. HE THOUGHT BOTH
PARTIES WOULD BE HAPPY WITH THIS DIVISION. HE ALSO
ARGUED THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ANY SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS
BETWEEN MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN MILITARY FORCES IN
SAHARA. COMMENT: MOST OF RECENT INFORMATION WE
HAVE SEEN INDICATES MOROCCO HAS NO INTENTION OF YIELDING
ALL OF WADI DHEHAB TO MAURITANIA. IN FACT, WE SUSPECT
MAURITANIA WILL BE LUCKY TO RETAIN TERRITORY SOUTH OF
24TH PARALLEL. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, WILL BE
REACTION OF MAURITANIAN POPULACE WHEN IT LEARNS THAT THIS
CONSIDERABLE WAR EFFORT HAS RESULTED IN ACQUISITION OF
RELATIVELY SMALL AND WORTHLESS PIECE OF DESERT. IF
GIRM IS NOT ABLE TO PRODUCE MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS,
WE BELIEVE POPULAR REACTION WILL BE NEGATIVE IF NOT OUT-
RIGHT HOSTILE. END COMMENT.

2. MAURITANIAN OFFICIAL WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM NOUAD-
HIBOU AND LA GUERA TELLS US GIRM IS IN PROCESS OF ESTA-
BLISHING ELECTRIC SERVICE AND SUPPLYING WATER AT LA
GUERA, DAKHLA, AND AARGUB. HE SAID THESE SERVICES MUST
BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BECAUSE, FOLLOWING DEPARTURE
OF SPANISH, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO MONEY ECONOMY
IN SAHARA. IN CASE OF LA GUERA, ALL FORMER INHABITANTS
HAVE BEEN MOVED TO NOUADHIBOU WHILE SECURITY FORCES
AND PERSONNEL FROM SOCIETE NATIONALE INDUSTRIELLE ET
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MINIERE CLEAN UP CITY AND REPAIR DAMAGE, WHICH WAS
REPORTEDLY MINIMAL, INCURRED DURING BATTLE FOR CONTROL
OF LA GUERA LAST DECEMBER. AS SOON AS CITY IS PUT
BACK IN ORDER, FORMER RESIDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN.

3. MAURITANIAN MEMBER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CITED PARA

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EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04

SIL-01 OMB-01 /123 W
---------- 015728
R 231713Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5003
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
FOSIF ROTA
COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0168

1(D) ABOVE EMPHASIZED TO EMBOFF JANUARY 22 THAT PREVIOUSLY EXISTING ECONOMY IN MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF SAHARA HAS VIRTUALLY COME TO HALT. AT PRESENT TIME, WADI DHEHAB IS WELFARE PROVINCE WHERE PRACTICALLY NO ONE IS EARNING A WAGE. HE OPINED THAT GIRM MUST NOT NLY PROVIDE FREE SERVICES IN POPULATED AREAS, BUT IT MUST MAKE AVAILABLE FREE FOOD THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN SAHARA. HE COMPLAINED FURTHER THAT MAURITANIAN WAR EFFORT WILL HAVE INEVITABLE EFFECT OF DETRACTING FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE CITED AS FIRST EVIDENCE
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OF THIS SITUATION RECENT SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN MILITARY BUDGET WITH CONCOMITANT EFFECT ON DEVELOPMENT BUDGET.

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4. IN OTHER SAHARAN DEVELOPMENTS, MAURITANIA'S GOVERNOR CHARGED WITH PROVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF WADI DHEHAB, HAMOUD OULD ABDEL WEDOUD, RECEIVED MOROCCAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT DAKHLA ON JANUARY 20. ACCORDING TO MAURITANIAN PRESS, TWO OFFICIALS DISCUSSED GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN CONTEXT OF TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. PRESS REPORT ADDED THAT MEETING WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY MAURITANIAN COMMANDANT AHMED SALEM OULD SIDI, COMMANDER OF THIRD SECTOR. MAURITANIA'S MINISTER FOR CULTURE, AHMEDOU OULD TOLBA, RETURNED TO NOUAKCHOTT JANUARY 20 FOLLOWING VISITS TO IRAQ, JORDAN, LEBANON, BAHREIN, SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, QATAR, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, AND SUDAN. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORT, TOLBA DELIVERED MESSAGES TO RES-PECTIVE CHIEFS OF STATE FROM PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH. TOLBA SAID MESSAGE EXPRESSED GIRM APPRECIATION FOR SUPPORT BY THOSE COUNTRIES ON SAHARAN QUESTION IN UNITED NATIONS. TOLBA ADDED THAT EACH CHIEF OF STATE ENCOUNTERED "EXPRESSED EVERY POSSIBLE RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION FOR OUR INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY". MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY, AHMED OULD MOHAMED SALAH, DEPARTED NOUAKCHOTT JANUARY 22 FOR RABAT WHERE HE WAS TO DELIVER MESSAGE FROM OULD DADDAH TO KING HASSAN.HANDYSIDE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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From: NOUAKCHOTT
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04 MAY 2006

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Review Release Date: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN VIEWS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUMMARY: WELL-INFORMED MAURITANIANS ASSERT GIRM DOES NOT
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, PDEV, MR, MO, AG, SS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006